Allocating Software Program Costs

May a portion of a software package's cost, used by multiple departments, be charged to the IDEA grant? Types of programs include READ 180, NovaNet, WordQ, Plato, Star Renaissance Learning Program, etc. – programs that are used by both general education and special education, but for different purposes.

The answer to allowability depends entirely on how the software program is being used. Here are three scenarios and the funding options:

Scenario 1

The LEA purchases 20 READ 180 licenses to provide specialized reading instruction to students with disabilities per the students' IEPs. The cost of all 20 licenses may be charged to the IDEA flow-through grant.

Scenario 2

The LEA purchases 70 READ 180 licenses. Of these licenses, 50 are used by a reading teacher to provide reading interventions to all students identified as struggling in reading. The group receiving general education reading interventions is made up of both students with and without disabilities. None of the 50 licenses purchased for general education may be charged to the IDEA flow-through grant as they are being used to deliver general education, and are therefore not an excess cost. The remaining 20 READ 180 licenses are used to provide specialized reading instruction to students with disabilities. The cost of these 20 licenses may be charged to the IDEA flow-through grant as they are being used to provide special education instruction.

Scenario 3

The LEA purchases 50 READ 180 licenses to provide general education reading interventions to all students identified as struggling in reading. The group receiving general education reading interventions is made up of both students with and without disabilities. None of the 50 licenses purchased for general education may be charged to the IDEA flow-through grant as they are being used to deliver general education, and are therefore not an excess cost.

The software costs can be pro-rated using percentages based on use (number of students) if it is not billed out by license.